

PATIENTS WITH CEREBRAL PALSY

Members of professional teams working with parents of handicapped children must recognize the primary role parents play in the development of a child's character and behavior. It appears that this aspect of development is highly significant in the functional outcome of children with cerebral palsy. The challenge is to help more parents to understand and to communicate this attitude in the management of their children with cerebral palsy.

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Accurate Diagnosis and Treatment of Pulmonary Embolism

PULMONARY EMBOLISM . . . is the most commonly missed major medical diagnosis. This was true 10 to 20 years ago and it probably is still true today. In the last few years, however, the emphasis has changed, and it is now fashionable to introduce the topic of pulmonary embolism as being one of the most commonly overdiagnosed medical conditions. My prejudice is that the truth lies somewhere in between, but it is extremely important to accurately establish the diagnosis of pulmonary embolism. The reason for this is that the mortality rate can be substantially lowered by accurate diagnosis and treatment with anticoagulants, particularly heparin, at the outset. It is also true that the condition should not be overdiagnosed, because of the risk of unjustified anticoagulant therapy. In many drug studies, particularly the cooperative drug analysis system that has been set up in the cooperating hospitals in Boston, it comes out year after year that the drugs that are most commonly associated with serious in-hospital morbidity and even mortality are anticoagulants. So anticoagulants should not be misused and this underscores the need for a reliable diagnosis of pulmonary embolism.

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